



**NC WISEWOMAN**  
Heart Health Month Toolkit



# INTRODUCTION

**February is Heart Health Month.**

**Health care professionals and community partners:  
We know you're busy! We can help.**

This Heart Health Month Resource Toolkit is designed to help NC WISEWOMAN Providers to promote heart health in their clinics and communities. The resources in this toolkit are provided to focus our attention on ways to prevent heart disease, maintain heart health and strengthen the work that you do for women in North Carolina.

You can tailor this messaging to your intended audience(s) to make your campaign more effective.

**Thank you for all that you do.**

For more information or additional resources, contact:  
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**American  
Heart  
Month**

F E B R U A R Y

# NC WISEWOMAN HEART HEALTH MONTH

# Heart Health Fact Sheet

American Heart Month, or Heart Health Month is a time to increase awareness of heart disease as a leading cause of death for Americans. Heart disease is the 2nd leading cause of death in North Carolina. It is important to know the risks for heart disease and the conditions that lead to it, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking<sup>1</sup>. Sometimes heart disease may be “silent” and not diagnosed until a person experiences signs or symptoms.



## RISK FACTORS

- Race/ethnicity
- Age
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Obesity & being overweight
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Physical inactivity
- Unhealthy eating

## KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose are important numbers to track for people at risk of heart disease. By keeping track of your numbers in between health care visits, you will be better able to manage your health.

**Blood Pressure** is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. If this pressure rises and stays high over time, it can damage the body and raises risk for heart disease and stroke.

Blood pressure is written as two numbers, the larger number (called systolic pressure) is the pressure when the heart beats.

The smaller number (called diastolic pressure) is the pressure when the heart rests between beats.

**Normal blood pressure** is below 120/80 mm Hg.

**High blood pressure** is a systolic pressure of 130 or higher, or a diastolic pressure of 80 or higher, that stays high over time.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (Hypertension) STAGE 1	130-139	or	80-89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (Hypertension) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Heart Disease. [www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/about.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/about.htm)

# NC WISEWOMAN HEART HEALTH MONTH

## Heart Health Fact Sheet

Make sure you check your blood pressure regularly and follow advice from your health care provider.

**Cholesterol** is a soft, fat-like, waxy substance found in the bloodstream and in all your body's cells. Cholesterol is an important part of a healthy body, but too much cholesterol in the blood can increase your risk for heart disease.

Cholesterol comes from 2 sources: your body and foods from animal sources only. It travels in the body by lipoproteins (LDL and HDL).

HDL helps keep LDL from sticking to artery walls and reduces plaque buildup. This process can lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.<sup>2</sup>

A health care professional can measure your blood cholesterol and help you understand what the levels mean in context of your overall heart health.

GOOD  
CHOLESTEROL  
= HDL



BAD  
CHOLESTEROL  
= LDL



### BLOOD SUGAR

Diabetes is a disease in which **blood sugar** (blood glucose) levels are too high because the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a tool that helps the body make energy.

Adults with diabetes are twice as likely to have heart disease compared to people who do not have diabetes. Over time, high blood sugar from diabetes can damage blood vessels in the heart and cause damage.<sup>3</sup> More than 2 in 3 people with diabetes have high blood pressure. Diabetes also raises cholesterol numbers. Your glucose levels help determine whether you are pre-diabetic, or diabetic.

A normal blood sugar level is less than 100 mg/dL.

**Pre-diabetes:** Blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed with diabetes.

**Diabetes** is diagnosed when blood sugar level is more than 126 mg/dL.

<sup>2</sup> American Heart Association. [www.heart.org/en/health-topics/cholesterol](http://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/cholesterol)

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/heart-disease-stroke.htm#:~:text=Leading%20risk%20factors%20for%20heart,unhealthy%20diet%2C%20and%20physical%20inactivity](http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/heart-disease-stroke.htm#:~:text=Leading%20risk%20factors%20for%20heart,unhealthy%20diet%2C%20and%20physical%20inactivity)



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Public Health



North Carolina Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation Program • NC WISEWOMAN HHM Toolkit • [www.dph.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov)  
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# 7 Ways to Reduce Heart Disease Risk

## 1. BE ACTIVE

Blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose are important numbers to track for people at risk of heart disease. By keeping track of your numbers in between health care visits, you will be better able to manage your health.

## 2. MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Being overweight or obese is associated with increased risk for heart disease.

## 3. QUIT TOBACCO USE

The risk of heart disease starts to drop in as little as a day after quitting. North Carolina's tobacco cessation service can help anyone quit any tobacco product including e-cigarettes. Call 1-800- QUITNOW for more information.

## 4. EAT A HEART HEALTHY DIET

A healthy diet can help protect the heart. This includes limiting the intake of salt, processed carbohydrates, alcohol, saturated fat (found in red meat and full-fat dairy products) and trans-fat (found in fried fast food, chips, baked goods).

## 5. MANAGE STRESS

Finding alternative ways to manage stress — such as physical activity, relaxation exercises or meditation — can help improve your health.

## 6. KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Regular screening of your blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels can tell you what your numbers are and what actions you need to take.

## 7. WORK WITH YOUR HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

You and your health care team can work together to prevent or treat the medical conditions that lead to heart disease. Discuss your treatment plan regularly and take a list of questions to your appointments.



# NC WISEWOMAN HEART HEALTH MONTH

## Resources for Preventing and Managing Heart Disease

### NC WISEWOMAN PROGRAM

<https://bccccp.dph.ncdhhs.gov/wisewoman.htm>

The North Carolina Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation (NC WISEWOMAN) Project provides cardiovascular disease screening, intervention, counseling and referral services to women eligible for the North Carolina Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (NC BCCCP). NC WISEWOMAN's mission is to provide low-income, underinsured, or uninsured 40- to 64-year-old women with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to improve their diet, physical activity, and other life habits to prevent, delay, or control cardiovascular and other chronic diseases.

### START WITH YOUR HEART

<https://startwithyourheart.com/>

The Justus-Warren Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Task Force and its Stroke Advisory Council provide resources and work with stakeholders throughout the state to prevent cardiovascular disease to promote timely diagnosis and effective treatment of acute cardiovascular event.

### MILLION HEARTS

<https://millionhearts.hhs.gov/>

Million Hearts® is a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes within 5 years. It focuses on implementing a small set of evidence-based priorities and targets that can improve cardiovascular health for all.

### LIVE HEALTHY TO BE THERE

<https://preventchronicdiseasenc.com/>

Live Healthy to Be There provides information, tips and tools to quit tobacco use, be physically active, eat healthy, monitor blood pressure, control blood sugar, maintain a healthy weight, track health numbers.

### NC TOBACCO CONTROL AND PREVENTION

<https://tobaccopreventionandcontrol.dph.ncdhhs.gov/>

NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch has information and resources to prevent the initiation to smoking and other tobacco use, help tobacco users quit, and reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.

### EAT SMART MOVE MORE

<https://eatsmartmovemorenc.com/>

Eat Smart, Move More NC is a statewide movement promoting opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity wherever people live, learn, earn, play, and pray.

# NC WISEWOMAN HEART HEALTH MONTH

## Sample Social Media Posts

If your organization uses social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, Heart Health Month is a great time to engage with your audience and educate about your services. Communication surrounding heart health should consider health literacy, promote patient-provider discussions of family history, risk and encourage regular screenings.

### SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

1. February is American #HeartMonth! Join CDC this month in raising awareness about cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention. There's work to be done across all age groups, not just among older adults: <https://cdc.gov/heartmonth>
2. Regular mammograms are the best tests doctors have to find breast cancer early. Confused about when to get a mammogram? Talk to your doctor about when you should start getting regular mammograms: <http://bit.ly/2Kquj26>
3. High blood pressure is often called the silent killer. You might not have symptoms, but it's a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Monitoring your own blood pressure at home can help you keep your blood pressure under control. <https://bit.ly/2iFB6U5> #HeartMonth
4. The North Carolina WISEWOMAN Program provides cardiovascular disease screening, intervention, counseling, and referral services to eligible women. Learn more about the program here: <http://bit.ly/3uRjuM4>
5. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) doesn't affect just older adults; data show that younger populations are increasingly affected by CVD. Use CDC's #HeartMonth toolkits, featuring a variety of free and shareable resources, to raise awareness of CVD in your community. <https://cdc.gov/heartmonth>

### For more additional resources or information, contact:

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# NC WISEWOMAN HHM

## My Heart Health Action Plan

You can take small steps to improve your heart health, eat healthier, be more physically active and take care of your well-being. Set a goal this month to make at least one healthy lifestyle change. Think of something you can start today! Keep track of your goals on this Heart Health Action Plan.



**GOAL: Keep it simple, start with one thing you pledge to change this month.**

This month, I would like to:	I met my goal on:
<input type="checkbox"/> Make an appointment to know my health numbers (blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose levels)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor my blood pressure at home by checking it once per day and discuss the results with my health provider	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask my provider how to manage my blood sugar based on my lab result	
<input type="checkbox"/> Know my weight, what a healthy number is and how to maintain it.	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Take steps towards living tobacco-free by _____</b> Example: Calling QuitlineNC for free resources at 1-800-Quit-Now	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Make healthier food choices by _____</b> Example: Choosing low-salt snacks, adding vegetables to all meals	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Move more by _____</b> Example: Taking a walk after dinner two times each week, joining a local exercise class	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Seek Support from my family and friends by _____</b> Example: Sharing my Heart Health Action Plan	

